

A Plea for Understanding

**A REPLY TO THE CRITICS OF THE DRAVIDIAN
PROGRESSIVE FEDERATION**

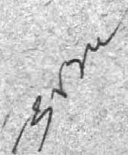
By
S. VEDARATNAM

VANGUARD PUBLISHING HOUSE, KANCHEEPURAM.
(S. INDIA)

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

"A Plea for Understanding" is the first of a series of books we intend publishing, with a view to placing before the public the aims and objectives of the Dravidian Progressive Federation. We do not wish to conceal our pride that our very first book should come from the pen of Mr. S. Vedaratnam, a talented and experienced journalist and a keen student of contemporary affairs. He represented the Indian press with distinction at the first United Nations Conference held in America in 1945. His appreciation of men and affairs is severely objective, and, in consequence, his observations are always marked with a magisterial impartiality and authority. "A Plea for Understanding" effectively silences the anti-Dravidian tirade indulged in by a section of the Indian press. It points to the writing on the wall which only the most purblind can fail to see.

Publishers.



A PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING

Great popular movements are not mere accidents of history. They are the outcome of the urge of the people for an assertion of the true nature of their corporate personality. Often humble and obscure at their source, they swell into oceanic proportions on their march towards their destination. Generally these movements are noticed only when they reach their final crescendo. We then work back laboriously to trace their beginnings.

Until some thirty years ago, the Dravidian movement was confined to the savants of Tamil literature who were constantly reminding us of the secular nature of ancient Dravidian society. Their righteous indignation against the Aryan way of life with its attendant caste system found ample expression in literary works which abound in magnificent outbursts against the intrusion of an alien culture and its corrupting influence over the social fabric.

It was only during the closing stages of World War I that an organised attempt was first made to make the people conscious of their rich heritage and of their distinct national characteristics. The great Self-Respect Movement began to take shape, and it soon gathered enough forces around itself to be able to call upon the Dravidian people to reject unequivocally the Aryan and Brahmanic theory of racial superiority and to ignore the puranas and ithihasas which are mainly concerned with keeping the Dravidians as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The Self-Respect Movement was in its early stages intimately associated with the then Justice party, which in those days had the good fortune to be served by a galaxy of brilliant leaders. The Justice party was on the ascendant so long as it kept close to the principles of the Self-Respect Movement. But it soon fell on evil days when it kicked the ladder with which it had climbed to great political heights; when the leaders occupied themselves more with the business of distributing the spoils than with attending to public welfare; when moneybags replaced men of talent and service. The discontent of partymen resulted in the discredited rump being given the *coup de grace* at the conference held in Salem in 1944. The party's name itself was changed into that of Dravida Kazhagam.

The Dravidian movement again began making steady progress when in 1949 an unfortunate event occurred, which shocked the people and threw the entire party mechanism into violent disorder, albeit temporarily. The leader of the Dravida Kazhagam had committed an act which was a clear violation of the basic principles of the Dravidian movement. The members of the party found themselves in an extremely embarrassing situation. While grateful to the leader for his past services to the party, they were however unwilling, quite naturally, to make any compromise on essentials. The situation was resolved in a novel and bold manner. Instead of removing the leader, the majority of the members of the Executive Committee and the General Secretary Mr. C. N. Annadurai resigned *en bloc* from the Dravida Kazhagam. They assembled at Madras on 17th September 1949 and inaugurated a

new organisation, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Dravidian Progressive Federation). They elected as their leader Mr. C. N. Annadurai who had by that time come to be acknowledged as the *de facto* leader of the Dravidian movement.

It will thus be seen that the Dravidian Progressive Federation is the latest organisational shape of the Dravidian movement. It is not a newcomer in the arena of public life. It is the answer to the anxious quest of the Dravidian people for a democratic organism best suited to give adequate expression to their feelings and sentiments, aims and aspirations.

The policies and purposes of the Dravidian Progressive Federation have of late come under a good deal of misrepresentation at the hands of the opponents of the Dravidian movement. The sinister forces at the back of this campaign of misrepresentation are no doubt powerful, helped as they are with the enormous resources which the vested interests have put at their command. Religion and tradition, authority and superstition, wealth and political power, each in itself is capable of placing formidable obstacles in the path of progress. But when they combine to present a united front, the task of freeing the people from their clutches becomes truly stupendous. History however teaches us that vested interests, however strong and impressive they may seem at the moment of their full mobilisation, have nevertheless retreated before the relentless onslaught of progressive forces.

It may be that today the privileged castes and classes are able to display an impressive facade of strength and solidarity in Dravidian India. The activities of the Dravidian Progressive Federation find little space in the big newspapers owned or controlled by the Brahmins. Not one word is published in them about the mammoth public meetings organised by the Dravidian Progressive Federation and attended by large audiences even in out of the way villages. But the speeches of khadi-clad patriots, whose public meetings have lately become conspicuous for the "select" number of people attending them, are reproduced in these newspapers under big headlines, of course, after they are metamorphosed by clever sub-editing. A Congress meeting attended by, say, 100 persons is reported "inadvertently" as having been attended by 1,000 persons. At times another cipher is added, and the number becomes 10,000. After all, what does it matter if one or two ciphers are added by mistake? The Brahmin press is governed by a code of journalistic ethics entirely different from any followed in other parts of the world! It is unique in the sense that it does not have to conform to public opinion! It serves the selfish and clannish interests of its masters with admirable promptitude and vigour. It suppresses with unerring regularity all the press statements issued by the Dravidian leaders.

It was only recently that a leading member of the Brahmin press sought to explain away this black-out by propounding a novel journalistic doctrine that newspapers should ignore such of those utterances of public men as

Understanding

in their opinion were not conducive to the promotion of public interests, though these utterances may command the approval of the mass of the people. "The majority may not always be in the right. So do not publish their views if in your opinion they are not in public interests." Such was the advice tendered by him to his fellow journalists. It did not occur to this gentleman of the press that journalistic ethics demand their publication even when they are unpalatable to the editors concerned, and that the best method of counteracting their evil effects, if the editors honestly felt that such will be the result, is to oppose them as best they could in their leading articles, after publishing the alleged offensive material in their columns. But to suppress them outright is not news-reporting as understood and practised in other parts of the world. It is nothing else than unashamed suppression of truth by the members of a clan enjoying all the advantages accruing out of their having had an early start in Indian journalism.

We for our part are not concerned so much with their suppression of Dravidian news and views as with their persistent attempt to misrepresent us to the outside world, besides portraying us in dark colours to our own people. Repeat a lie many times and eventually it sticks to the soil, this would seem to be their motto! It matters little to them if these lies are exposed by the Dravidian leaders! It matters still less if the authors of these lies are held to public ridicule and contempt! Also, it does not matter if the language periodicals of the Dravidian press answer these malicious accusations point by point! It

is enough if they are tenaciously repeated, so the Brahmin press thinks. After all, as things stand at present, the North Indian public depends upon the Brahmin press for Dravidian news and views!

The same is the case with North Indian leaders who are placed in positions of authority. They seldom care to acquaint themselves with the real feelings and sentiments of the Dravidian public expressed through their language journals. They are guided in their policy towards the South by the advice and guidance they receive from "wise" men who invariably happen to belong to the Brahmin community. These Brahmin advisers, however great may have been their past services to the country and however "wise" they may be, are of course one hundred percent communalistic in their thought and behaviour. Brahmin interests have always clashed with Dravidian interests, and it would be too much to expect of a Brahmin to display a just or even a strictly judicial outlook on matters pertaining to the South. Of course, a way can be found and must be found, sooner than later, of reconciling Dravidian and Brahmin interests. This is the crux of the Dravidian problem. To find a solution to this problem is one of the main objectives of the Dravidian Progressive Federation.

But while striving strenuously to establish harmonious relationship between the Dravidian and Aryan nationalities, the Dravidian Progressive Federation cannot shut its eyes to the grim realities of the present. It cannot, for instance, afford to ignore the sinister misrepresentation

of the Dravidian viewpoint by the South Indian Brahmin press which is supported by wealthy press barons from the North. It cannot allow the daily slander of its aims and objectives to go unnoticed. It has got to speak out the truth, not only in Dravidian interests, but also in the larger interests of the Indian sub-continent.

Some of the lies spread abroad about the aims and activities of the Dravidian Progressive Federation are fantastic in the extreme. It is astonishing to note with what brazenness these lies are set forth in the Brahmin press, not under cover of darkness, but in broad daylight; not even with a show of restraint, but unashamedly and unrestrainedly. Not a day passes without some Brahmin scribe showering calumny and abuse on the heads of respected Dravidian leaders. But for the spirit of moderation and political tolerance displayed by the leader of the Dravidian Progressive Federation Mr. C. N. Annadurai, the malicious vilification of Dravidian leaders by the Brahmin press might by now have plunged the South in an orgy of blood bath.

But for this great sacrifice motivated by the noblest type of patriotism, the blood and tears shed by our people in "communal riots" should have swelled into vast proportions. Our North Indian brethren and their leaders will do well not to be misled by the lies spread about the Dravidian people day in and day out by the Brahmin press, and not to attempt to coerce the South into a position of servitude. Our tolerance should not be misunderstood for weakness; our allegiance to democratic and

constitutional methods should not be misconstrued as indicative of lack of faith on our part in the principles we uphold.

The South has been insulted again and again by our Delhi rulers. The Dravidians are being treated as political untouchables. Still they have stuck to the path of constitutionalism. Their faith in the methods of discussion and negotiation, persuasion and agreement, is still undiminished. Democracy continues to be their article of faith. But democracy to be successful requires a high moral and intellectual standard amongst all sections of the population. It is like a glass house, difficult to build and delicate in structure. It cannot thrive where a racial majority comprising the major portion of the country seeks to dominate over a minority, denying the latter equality of rights and opportunities. Also, its very existence is imperilled when an influential community secures for itself special privileges and advantages by virtue of its "high" birth, by reason of "divine sanctions" enumerated and reiterated in religious texts. When rational political thought is sought to be crushed under religious authoritarianism, secular democracy becomes a farce and theocracy rides triumphant.

First and foremost among the many lies manufactured by the Brahmin propaganda machinery to defame the fair name of the Dravidian Progressive Federation is that the latter preaches irreligion and spreads atheism, thereby corrupting the morals of the young.

"If Socrates were alive today", remarks Sir R. W. Livingstone in his introduction to *Plato*, "he would be asking

our politicians, journalists and others what exactly they meant by liberty or democracy or a classless society, or by any other slogan or catchword of the moment. It is the misfortune of every nation that Socrates is not alive and *has left no successors.*"

It is, however, our good fortune that in Dravida Nad today are to be found many "successors" to Socrates, thanks to the education given to the people by the Dravidian Progressive Federation. The people have been taught to ask questions of their "holy" men, politicians and economists and not to rest content until they receive satisfactory answers. The result is that a spirit of enquiry is in the air. And in the context of the peculiar conditions prevailing in the South, the first to be affected by such a spirit of enquiry is the Brahmin community, which for centuries past has reserved certain social privileges and advantages solely for itself to the detriment of all others.

The Brahmins have been able to enjoy these privileges and advantages for so long a period, not on the strength of political or economic grounds, but largely on the basis of religion. Ideas of superiority and inferiority between man and man, between caste and caste, have been inextricably mixed up with religious principles and practices and injected into the minds of the people as unalterable maxims which cannot be questioned without offending god and religion! It is sacrilege to question their validity! It is preaching irreligion to protest against social injustices and inequalities!

Our North Indian brethren who may happen to read this pamphlet will do well to bear in mind that institutional Hinduism as understood and practised in their part of the country is in most respects different from that which obtains in the South. The main Hindu philosophical systems are no doubt common to the entire Indian sub-continent. We are not concerned here with the respective merits or demerits of these systems or with their comparison and contrast with the philosophical thought of the other religions. It is enough if we remind ourselves of what is more or less a commonplace, namely, that most of the eternal verities of mankind are common to all the great religions of the world. The difference between one religion and another lies in the degree of emphasis which each lays upon a particular system or principle or moral and ethical code or its insistence on the punctilious performance of certain rites and rituals.

With the passage of time the basic philosophical core of each religion tends to gather around itself beliefs and practices and dogmas sometimes wholly at variance with its real self. Thus it comes to pass that the same religion is differently interpreted in different countries. The twisting of fundamental religious truths and their tortuous interpretation is due not a little to ambitious and wily priests whose ingenious methods for strengthening their hold over the people are only too well-known to be recapitulated here. If our North Indian brethren bear these things in mind, they will find that Hinduism as "practised" by them is radically different from that which obtains in the South.

Historians are agreed that the system of caste based on birth was unknown to the ancient Dravidians and that it was first introduced amongst them with the advent of the Aryans from the North. The South Indian social fabric is today cut into thousands of watertight compartments, each compartment constituting a caste, however small its number may be. Some castes are as tiny as only 500 strong. Inter-dining and inter-marriage between the castes are strictly prohibited. Of course, all these castes belong to the Hindu fold, but that is so only for the purpose of keeping them confined within the narrow orbit allotted to each.

Among most of these castes marriage is but a mechanical affair as the choice is strictly limited to a ridiculously low number. *Let it be noted that all these castes belong to the Hindu religion.* It is not our purpose here to discuss the position of the Scheduled Castes who are clearly kept out of the bounds of Hindu society. We are now concerned with the fourfold division of Hindu society and the hundreds of castes and sub-castes belonging to each major division. Caste upon caste, layer upon layer, turret upon turret, the pyramidal structure rises up higher and higher, until at last the Brahmin community stands at the pivotal top.

Certain sastras can be read only by Brahmins and the sudras cannot even touch them with a pair of tongs. According to these sastras, if a Brahmin commits a grave crime, his sin can easily be eradicated by a light punishment, say, by bathing in a particular well or river and chanting some mantras. But when a sudra makes even

a small error, he is visited with the most rigorous punishment. He may have to part with all his wealth to the Brahmins or he may have to serve them as a slave till the end of his life. Not only he but also his wife and children will have to share the same fate for his sins. If it is felt that even then the punishment is not enough, he is asked to direct his future generations to serve the Brahmins as long as the world lasts ! This is the stuff which the Tamil Hindu sastras and puranas are made of !

The person of the Brahmin is held sacred and a crime ceases to be a crime when he commits it ! The number of Tamil puranas and the stories contained in them easily run into many thousands. Not content with this prolific output of puranic literature, some enterprising Brahmins and their paid scribes are creating new ones ! Their modern interpretation of puranic texts is promptly published in the Brahmin press. There is no question at all of any lack of space in publishing them. Take up today's *Hindu* of Madras and you will be amazed to find that under the headline "Today's Engagements", ninety percent of meeting notices relate to puranic lectures to be presided over by eminent educationists, prominent politicians, High Court judges, leading lawyers—of course, all of them belonging to the Brahmin community or the next higher castes among the sudras.

We would not have concerned ourselves here so much with the puranas if only they had been treated merely as puranas. But most unfortunately for the Dravidian people, it is not so. It is a sacrilege to deny their supposed historicity, though no amount of modern

scientific historical research can prove it. We are asked to have implicit faith in their truth or we are done for ever! We must accept the ideas contained in them, implicit or explicit! It is not for us to question the moral aspect of the diverse types of justice ear-marked for different castes! It is not for us to doubt the "divine dispensation" which has ordained in its plenitude of wisdom that the Brahmins shall be entitled to enjoy certain special privileges, while members of the other Hindu castes shall have no share in them!

It will thus be seen that the vast majority of the people professing Hindu religion in the South are treated as social inferiors, while a small community of non-Dravidian origin known as the Brahmins is vested with extraordinary rights and privileges. Whatever may have been the circumstances which in the past enabled such an unnatural and arbitrary division of society to take place, no one with any claim to sanity can defend it these days. It is the duty of all those who are determined to ensure for the people equality of opportunities to denounce such a monstrous social inequity. Respect for human dignity and human rights compels us to protest against a practice which treats the mass of the people as helots, but recognises a handful of persons as the master-caste.

Is it then preaching irreligion to ask the people not to believe in these puranic stories which have stunted the growth of society and led to its degeneration? Is the Dravidian Progressive Federation spreading irreligion when it says that the puranic stories are the result of perverted imagination, intended to perpetuate the privileges

of a single community? Is the Dravidian Progressive Federation corrupting the morals of the people when it insists on equal opportunities being given to all sections of the population irrespective of caste or creed? Is the Dravidian Progressive Federation propagating atheism when it teaches the people to develop a sense of proper perspective and treat the puranic stories as mere stories?

It is an uphill task, the task of curing society of its faith in these puranic stories. It demands unselfish and unremitting labour. It possesses no glamour, no personal gains for those engaged in it. On the contrary, it involves personal sacrifices of the severest type and brings those engaged in it to a clash with powerful vested interests. Despite all these disadvantages, the Dravidian Progressive Federation has come forward to cure society of the puranic canker which is eating into its very vitals. In the circumstances, it is a crime against society to misrepresent the aims and aspirations of the Dravidian Progressive Federation. We should be grateful to it for possessing the moral stamina to courageously grapple with a situation which has baffled the best minds of the country.

Apart from strengthening and perpetuating the caste system by dividing society into a number of caste compartments, the Tamil puranas are mostly filthy inasmuch as they are filled with obscene stories coming under the category of sexy literature. Under the guise of describing the love affairs of the gods and goddesses, the rishis and their wives and mistresses, they cater to the lecherous tastes of the debauchee. Even the most hardened writer of modern sexy stories will blush to read the

descriptive passages in the puranas giving an account of the sexy impulses animating our gods and goddesses!

Take for instance the puranic festival which is being celebrated even today at Srirangam. One night God Ranganadha returned to his temple very late and wanted to enter his bed-room at once. The door was barred inside by Goddess Lakshmi. Ranganadha knocked the door in vain. After some minutes, Goddess Lakshmi assumed the guise of a *battacharya* (priest), and opened the door a little to see who it was who had called at that late hour in the night. In the meantime, God Ranganadha too had assumed the guise of a *battacharya*. Lakshmi suspected him, and declined to open the door. God Ranganadha, who is alleged to have swallowed the world, then revealed his real identity, begged her to pardon him, giving her repeated assurances of good behaviour in future. He promised that in future he will not enter the house of his mistress. Eventually, Lakshmi came out with a broomstick in hand, thrashed her spouse with it, and then took him to her bed.

Is it good and proper that we should allow such festivals of a scandalous nature to be celebrated in the name of god? Do not such festivals degrade the very conception of god as an object of unimpeachable purity? We have given above only a bare outline of the puranic story, omitting entirely the obscene dialogue between God Ranganadha and Goddess Lakshmi. But even this outline should be sufficient to give the reader a fairly good idea of the nature and content of our Tamil puranas.

Let us now look into another puranic story where the verdict of God is determined by caste. In holy Madhurai, in the temple of God Chockanadhar, God Siva and his consort Parvathi were once engaged in playing an interesting game of chess. Suddenly Siva discontinued the game and stood up. When the Goddess demanded of him the reason for the abrupt discontinuance of the game, he replied he was leaving immediately to answer the call of a pious devotee. Both of them then left by air, and the devotee soon received his much needed blessings. The devotee had already committed certain sins, and, of course, he had to be cleansed of his sins before his piety could be accorded recognition. The method of purification suggested by Siva himself was quite simple. The devotee had to take a bath in the Tank of the Golden Lotus. Next he had to gather some grass with which to feed a cow. And lastly, he must walk around the temple three times. And lo! he secured eternal bliss after going through this purificatory process. Let us now inquire into the antecedents of this devotee and the nature of his crimes. He was guilty of all the Five Deadly Sins mentioned in the puranas. He had murdered his father! Not content with this delectable task, he had cohabited with his mother! It is this devotee who received the blessings of Siva in the twinkling of an eye! The extenuating circumstance in this case was that he was a Brahmin. Is this a verdict based on the merits of the case? Or, is it one based on the caste system?

To quote Mr. C. N. Annadurai: "Is it necessary to link our God inextricably with obscene puranic stories?"

Is it good to attribute to God qualities of meanness and clothe him with the characteristics of a debauchee? Does the inculcation of such puranic stories serve to improve public or private morality? Not content with creating the figure of a Mohini, whose charms were provocative enough to compel Lord Siva to capitulate before her, we have also clothed God in the figure of a pig! Is it just that we should subject the conception of God to such base ridicule?

"Our puranic literature is mostly concerned with the romances of Nayanmars and Alwars. Their main preoccupation is with the *avatars* of God, depicting scenes of unbridled vulgarity which, though done in the name of religion, are such as will ultimately lead to inter-racial ill-will and mutual extermination. They are repugnant to independent thinking and ordinary common-sense. They are inimical to the promotion of a rational outlook among the people and merely serve to keep them immersed in the slough of ignorance.

"It is not my aim to enter into a discussion on whether or not a God exists. What I should like to emphasise is that we in Dravida Nad today do not possess a God conceived in a manner which is not revolting to our intelligence and good taste. We do not have a God who is not associated with ugliness and obscenity; we do not have a religion which is pure and clean; we do not have a literature which is imbued with a spirit of love and tolerance; we do not enjoy that kind of freedom which ensures the observance of human rights and enables men to live as human beings.

"We need a literature which is free from sex obscenities and incidents encouraging religious bigotry. We want literary works that will raise the general level of people's intelligence. We want books that will faithfully reflect the spirit of our age. We must develop that kind of outlook which treats all humanity as one and admits of but one God. We want a God who asks of us only our love. We refuse to have anything to do with Gods which want us to give them palaces, priests to serve as their middlemen, wives, mistresses, lands and costly jewels and festivals. We do not want to prolong for a day a situation which allows huge accumulation of wealth inside the temples, while the people outside are steeped in misery and poverty. If only God were to address the people direct, he would say: 'How foolish you are! I created the world. I created the waters and the grains. I gave you pearls and emeralds and gold. Above all, I gave you intelligence with which to differentiate between right and wrong. But what are you giving me in return? You are trying to please me with your *pongol* made of half a measure of rice! I do not want that. All that I want is that you should love the poor and the downtrodden and try to improve their lot'.

"Poet Barathi voiced the feelings of the people when he sang that a *Pappan* could not and should not any longer be called as *Ayyar*, nor a white *Feringhee* be addressed a *Durai*. Has not even Barathi opened your eyes to the realities of the situation? Have you considered for a moment if the ideas of justice adumbrated in our puranic literature are just or applicable to our times? Of what avail is that literature whose

ideas of justice are but one-sided? Do we really need such a literature? Friends, please let me have your considered verdict on these questions."

If we have quoted Mr. C. N. Annadurai at some length, it is because we want the reader to understand clearly and without the shadow of a doubt how baseless and malicious is the accusation put forth by the Brahmin press that the Dravidian Progressive Federation is preaching atheism and corrupting people's morals. Political dishonesty is carried to its extreme length when a small clan, which is afraid of losing its ill-gotten privileges, falsely attributes to a leader opinions which he has not countenanced. All that Mr. C. N. Annadurai and the Dravidian Progressive Federation of which he is the founder wish to do is to release the people from the clutches of superstitious beliefs and practices instilled into their minds by the Brahmanic puranas and sastras and sought to be kept alive by the Brahmin clan in the name of god and religion. It is this attempt to resuscitate and reconstruct society on a rational basis, this supreme effort to reclaim society which is at the moment moth-eaten, disorganised and disunited, that is misrepresented to the outside world by a set of venomous scribes as preaching atheism and communalism.

Prime Minister Pandit Nehru echoed the same sentiments, nay, repeated the very words of Mr. C. N. Annadurai when he said, while addressing a public meeting at Delhi in connection with the Gandhi Jayanti celebrations: "The Hindu and Sikh communal organisations are posing themselves as strong champions of Hindu religion

and Hindu nation. Such forces have reduced Hindu religion to a kitchen religion. *To them religion is confined to the length of one's tuft on the head or the length of the sandal marks on the forehead. This is the interpretation today of Hindu religion given by communal forces in the country who call themselves champions of the religion.* If certain forces want to make Hindu religion a matter of tenets and Hindu customs they are playing a big fraud on the people".

Dravidian India should be grateful to Pandit Nehru for broadcasting word for word, though unintentionally, the message of the leader of the Dravidian Progressive Federation to a wider audience. It is at the same time imperative that the various nationalities of the Indian sub-continent, particularly our North Indian brethren, should clearly understand that the views of Pandit Nehru quoted above are exactly the same as those propagated by the Dravidian Progressive Federation.

It is gratifying to learn that Pandit Nehru at long last has come to possess some real understanding of the nature of the Brahmin-Nonbrahmin conflict in Dravida Nad. It is good to hear the Prime Minister of the country declare, though impliedly, that the separatist tendencies of the South are the logical outcome of the communal spirit animating certain reactionary forces. Says Nehru: "The cry of Hindu India or Hindu Rashtra is fraught with peril, because if that ideology gained ground, it would not be confined to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs but would spread to the whole of India and its

different sub-castes. It would intensify separatist tendencies already existing like the Brahmin-Nonbrahmin feeling in South India".

While the Dravidian Progressive Federation is grateful to the Prime Minister for condemning "communalism" in no uncertain terms, it desires that the freedom of speech which he exercised in this connection be also given to it for the same purpose. It may be that Pandit Nehru is not aware of the fact that many members of the Dravidian Progressive Federation have been fined and imprisoned and subjected to barbarous treatment in jails for giving expression to views and sentiments exactly similar to those expressed by him at the Delhi meeting. It may be that he is still unaware of the vast public support which the Dravidian Progressive Federation is gathering around the principle of a secular state to which he has repeatedly professed his firm allegiance.

It is however very necessary that Pandit Nehru and our North Indian brethren should know that the powerful South Indian Brahmin press is trying to discredit the Dravidian movement by accusing it of spreading "communal hatred", a clever expression to hoodwink the North to whom "communal hatred" means only one thing, namely, Hindu-Muslim warfare. It is only natural that the people of the North, who know only too well all the horrors of communal frenzy in the shape of Hindu-Muslim riots, should view with distaste the alleged "communal" activities of the Dravidian leaders publicised through the Brahmin press. But the communalism which stalks

in the midst of our North Indian brethren bears no resemblance whatsoever to the "communalism" said to be prevalent in the South.

The Dravidian Progressive Federation is mainly concerned with cleansing society of the evil effects of Brahmanism as we know it today. It is animated by the same zeal for social reform which marked the activities of the great social reformers of the past like Rajaram Mohan Rai. It aims at establishing a truly secular state in the South—a state in which one section of the population will not be allowed to have a stranglehold over the rest in the name of god and caste. It is this valiant effort on the part of the Dravidian Progressive Federation to scotch reactionary Brahmin communalism that is unashamedly misrepresented to the outside world by the Brahmin press as fostering "communal hatred". But then the Brahmin press is "nationalistic"! Brahmin nationalism is 'divine' and the lay man is by no means best fitted to probe into the intricate nature of the divine mind!

The Dravidian Progressive Federation's emphasis on the term "Dravidian" is intended to make the people conscious of their rich heritage—a culture that is happily free from the Brahmanic tenets and dogmas which seek to perpetuate social injustices and inequalities.

In this connection, it is pertinent to ask what justification is there for the South Indian Brahmins and their admirers in the North to take exception to our calling ourselves Dravidians? Have the Dravidians fallen so low that they could not even be allowed to call themselves by

their own name? Are they to content themselves by meekly accepting the contemptuous expression of "Madara-sees" hurled against them by the North? Have the Gujeratis, the Punjabis, the Bengalis and other sub-nationalities of the North ceased to exist as such merely because they all happen to be citizens of the Indian Union? Why should the wrath of our pseudo-nationalists be roused when they hear the term Dravidian—a great name which, whatever be the present position of the people bearing it, connotes a culture, a literature, a civilisation, a way of life second to none in the whole world? Was the immortal Tagore wrong when he included "Dravidam" among the many national streams running through this sub continent? Are the North Indians ashamed of calling themselves Aryans? Why then should any one take exception to the Dravidians calling themselves Dravidians?

It is one thing to say that the Dravidians and all other nationalities inhabiting this land are all Indian citizens, and quite another to insist that each one of them should lose its distinct identity. Here again, the Indian Prime Minister has made a statement which compels our attention. To quote: "While unity is essential, an enforced uniformity is not only not necessary but, I think, is undesirable. Why should we not keep this great variety, which enriches our lives in addition to our basic unity? It would be doing great harm to our concept of India if we tried to confine it in a strait jacket of a particular point of view or some special customs or ways of life to which some of us are accustomed. We cannot do so because geography, climate and cultural inheritance prevent this regimentation."

It is the tragedy of post-independent India that the Prime Minister, whose utterances are never lacking in fine and exalted sentiments and principles, seldom takes pains to put them into practice. Or, it may be that he is unable to do so in the present context of affairs in the Congress organisation. Whatever be the reason, his plea for allowing the full development of the personality of each of the various nationalities without their being battered into a dead level of regimented uniformity by dictation from above, has been effectively sabotaged by those entrusted with high authority.

The attempt of the Hindi fanatics to thrust Hindi down the throats of the Dravidians is an instance in point. Tamil, the parent of all the Dravidian languages, possesses a classical literature which is old as the hills, clear as the mountain spring and pure and fragrant as the jasmine. Age cannot wither, nor custom stale its beauty. Its study was sadly neglected during the British occupation. One of the main forces that continually kept alive the liberation movement in the South was the promise often repeated by the 'nationalists' that as soon as the country was freed from the foreigner's yoke Tamil would be restored to its rightful place in Dravida Nad. But quite the contrary thing has happened. The Dravidians received a rude shock when they found that Hindi was to be imposed upon them either by direct compulsion or by back-door methods.

A little more imagination on the part of our North Indian brethren will enable them to have an idea of the intense heartburning and chagrin which the Dravidians felt

when they found Hindi fanatics displaying an unbending attitude, under the leadership of so responsible a person as Rajarishi Purushottamdas Tandon, over so simple and innocuous an issue as the adoption of Arabian numerals. Tandon and his followers insisted on having their pound of flesh. The many admonitions and threats of retribution held out to the Dravidians if they failed to fall in line with the Hindi imperialists provoked even the docile Congress Members from Dravida Nad to turn and say that the South will resist the imposition of Hindi with all its strength. But they protested in vain.

The study of the Dravidian languages which was so loudly talked about in pre-independence days was to be quietly dropped and Hindi was to be given the seat of honour in Dravidian schools and colleges! Will our Hindi-speaking friends put up with any attempt to make the study of a Dravidian language compulsory in their own educational institutions? Dravidian sentiment has been wounded and it may take a long long time before it is healed. Throughout the length and breadth of Tamil Nad, in all railway stations, big and small, even in small village stations where the train hardly ever stops, the name-board contains the station's name in three languages, Hindi, English and Tamil. On the top, the name in Hindi is inscribed in bold letters, next comes English and at the bottom is to be found the name in Tamil in tiny letters, which one could not decipher unless one goes nearest to the name-board. What have the Hindi imperialists gained in thus literally relegating Tamil in Tamil Nad to the last place? Did they fear that

the Government of India would have fallen if they had allowed the station name in Tamil to be written on top in bold letters? Do they imagine that by this vulgar display of political power they have succeeded in imposing Hindi in Dravida Nad?

They have on the contrary done a grievous injury to the propagation of Hindi in the South. There is such a thing as sentiment which the Dravidians too possess, and it is a pity that the Hindi fanatics should have succeeded in hitting it with their poisonous arrows. Is this not an attempt at creating an enforced uniformity which Nehru declaims against so vehemently? Where do we find in all this linguistic and political fanaticism of the North any genuine move to preserve and develop that "composite culture" of India which Nehru affirms is "our proud heritage"?

Says the Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. V. Rajamannar, Chief Justice of Madras: "We hear often of synthesis of cultures and our common heritage. Exhortations have been made that a synthesis should be deliberately aimed at and achieved of the culture of the East and the West. For a real fusion and synthesis of these two cultures resulting in a common culture for a vast nation like ours, I venture to think that even decades are not sufficient. And even then, the fusion and synthesis must be natural, gradual and unconscious. *Such a synthesis cannot happen suddenly by imposition from outside or from deliberate volition...* Though in one sense and a very important sense, there is a fundamental unity underlying

all Indian culture, I am unable to overlook the more or less marked differences, sometimes subtle, between the different cultures prevailing in different parts of India. Culture is after all a way of life. *It would be idle to say that the way of life of an orthodox Brahmin, say, of Tanjore, is identical with the way of life of an orthodox Bengali Brahmin or an orthodox Punjabi Brahmin, though the basic tenets and philosophy of conduct are the same...*"

Compulsion cannot bring about a union of hearts. A composite culture cannot be made to order, still less by the imposition of the language and culture of the dominant nationality over the rest. It is hardly possible for the Dravidians to fraternise with their Northern neighbours who but yesterday argued so tenaciously that we should learn to write even the numerals in Hindi, however ugly and clumsy they may look. The Dravidian nationality is up and moving. It is time that our Delhi rulers read the writing on the wall and bestirred themselves to the realities of the situation. Tolerance has never been a rare commodity with us. We shall of course do our very best to appreciate the finer points of the Hindi culture and language. We are at the same time proud that our own classical Dravidian literature and culture possesses an excellence which we cannot allow to fade away at anybody's dictation.

The charge of communalism against the Dravidian Progressive Federation is sought to be strengthened by the Brahmin press by another device. The Dravidian Progressive Federation supports the "Communal G. O."

and therefore is it not self-evident that it is a communal organisation? asks the sanatanist scribe. The much-maligned Communal G. O. is a Madras Government directive issued in 1928, regulating admission to professional colleges and appointments to government services so that backward communities might not be smothered under the impact of socially and educationally advanced communities. Our puranas and sastras and religious injunctions have effectively prevented certain backward communities from having any access to knowledge which has been kept the sole preserve of the Brahmin community. The backward communities have a lot of leeway to make up in the matter of education whose value is over-rated in an undeveloped society. The government had done the barest minimum when it set apart a certain percentage of government appointments and seats in colleges to the members of the backward communities. This reservation was surely not done on the basis of population. In fact, the Brahmin community was given more seats than its population ratio warranted. But the Brahmins were not satisfied. They went right up to the Supreme Court to have the G. O. declared *ultra vires* of the Constitution Act.

Even a worm turns back and bites. Congress Minister Madhava Menon gave vent to his impotent wrath in the following statement he made before the Madras Assembly: "However much we may say that there should be no communal-mindedness and that we should be absolutely fair, it is impossible for us, *living as we are in this State*, not to face the realities...Until all the

communities are given opportunities to compete with each other, some protection is necessary. There is no doubt about that."

Minister Menon admits that some protection is necessary, especially in this State so that backward communities might not be completely crushed under the weight of Brahmin monopoly. Mr. Pothan Joseph, in his usual masterly fashion, summarises the position thus: "The Supreme Court's judgment confirms the invalidation of what is called the Communal G. O. prevalent for many years in the Madras province before the commencement of the Constitution, because in their Lordships' opinion the order in question conflicted with the provisions of Part 3 (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution now in force. The Madras Ministry has on the recoil virtually decided to recommend that the phraseology should be so amended as to permit a State freedom of *proportionate* admission to colleges and recruitment to the services as may be considered expedient by the State Government *to ward off monopoly* and give encouragement to classes left behind in the previous phases of social struggle for existence. When the Justice Party issued the order to give a helping hand to backward sections, it committed the folly of acquiescing in the description "Communal G. O." It invited on the provision a malodorous significance which was bound to be its doom, apart from the tricky wording of the clause on "Equality" introduced in the text of the Constitution against the spirit of the Minority Sub-Committee's Report. If instead of the repellent name "Communal G. O." the term "Inter-

communal G. O." or "Equalitarian G. O. or "Anti-monopolistic G. O." had been popularised, the idea of *reservation for outstripped communities* would not have been so gross as to make the demand for its repeal as a self-evident proposition in the code of democratic patriotism. But now on the interpretation of the Constitution itself, the State is disabled from offering sheltered *admission* to candidates incapable of holding their own in examinations where proficiency is determined by memory tests and cramming-power as against other qualities that might constitute part of merit. Before the passing of the Constitution when the problem behind the G. O. was being timidly discussed, it had been made clear to the satisfaction of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that formulas of old-world competition were not literally applicable in Madras, Mysore and Travancore-Cochin, where the record of "marks" had excluded backward communities from even a tithe of the share due to them on the calculus of equitable recruitment without any catastrophic loss of efficiency in professions and in the public services."

The Constitution has since been amended, but in a manner which does not allow the G. O. to operate as before. This is the story behind the Dravidian Progressive Federation's support to the Communal G. O. An intense anxiety to see that social justice is done, in however small a measure, to the oppressed communities which have been for centuries deprived of a fuller life by the pernicious principle of caste supremacy and the "divine right" of the Brahmin community to reserve for itself the sole enjoyment of the good things of life, is the basic urge behind the Federation's support to the

Communal G. O. Is this communalism? Is this communalism of the type which stalks the length and breadth of North India and which is rightly condemned by all shades of public opinion?

Few reasonable men will take exception to the Dravidian claim that the political freedom of this vast sub-continent, which was won by the collective endeavour and sacrifice of all the Indian nationalities, should be commonly shared by all the peoples, and not by a few privileged castes and groups alone. The Dravidian people, therefore, cannot be expected to support a Government which does not in the least represent them. The present composition of the Delhi cabinet is an instance in point. The Delhi Cabinet contains at the moment three members from the Dravidian South—Messrs. C. Rajagopalachariar, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar and K. Santanam Ayyangar. It may be that this distinguished trio from the South crystallizes in itself all the wisdom and talent and genius of India. We would however draw the attention of our North Indian brethren to the rather suspicious circumstance of all these three distinguished men belonging to the same Brahmin caste—a caste which, though it constitutes only three percent of the population of South India, has by virtue of its clannish cohesiveness and the earlier start it gained through the help of the British rulers who were only too willing to help those who helped them, practically succeeded in shutting out the people from all avenues towards a better and fuller life.

Our North Indian brethren will do well to pause and ponder for a moment whether these three wise men from

the Brahmin community of the South can lay any claim to representative character. If ability alone were the sole criterion for inclusion in the Union cabinet, we may point out with pardonable pride that any junior clerk in the Madras Secretariat will, if given an opportunity, be able to discharge the functions of the Prime Minister of India with honour and distinction. But democracy needs something more than talent. It needs to be worked by the true representatives of the people.

In this connection it is well to remember that the Dravidian Progressive Federation is not in the least worried over the non-inclusion of Dravidian representatives in the Union cabinet. On the contrary, we are happy that we are not associated with a government which has excelled even our former foreign rulers in displaying a callous indifference to the sufferings of the people and in suppressing freedom of speech and expression. But we strongly resent being told that the aforesaid three gentlemen are representatives of the Dravidian people. Far from being our representatives, they represent only the interests of a small clan which, with the aid of religion and superstition, authority and tradition, is still able to keep the common man under conditions which are little different from slavery. The Dravidian Progressive Federation constitutes a big protest against the tyranny of a single caste, against the claim for the exercise of "divine rights" by an arrogant clan.

The Dravidian Progressive Federation's opposition to North Indian commercial interests is purely economic,

there is nothing racial about it. The helpless peasant who loses his only hut and the small bit of land to the Marwari money-lender from the North is not interested in anthropological researches. But he remembers to the end of his life that a North Indian deprived him by unfair means of his food and shelter. To him all North Indians are the same, be they money-lenders or cloth-shop owners. The petty retail trader, who winds up his provision stores owing to uneconomic competition in the shape of price reduction from formidable North Indian cartels, finds later that they have raised commodity prices to a very high level. The same situation is obtained in big business as well. Commerce, banking, insurance, industries, all these are concentrated in the hands of a few unscrupulous capitalists from the North. A situation has now arisen when the Dravidians cannot pursue their normal business activities in their own State.

What are the Dravidians to do? Are they to leave Dravida Nad once again for Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and Africa, as they did under British rule? Do our North Indian brethren expect us to love these financial vultures who have descended upon us from the North and who are bleeding our people white? It is easy to cite plenty of instances of North Indian commercial exploitation of Dravida Nad which has been carried to an extent which was not permitted even under British rule. We content ourselves with stating that far from being hostile to our North Indian brethren—and we know that they too are subject to most of the disabilities which the South is contending against—we are only too willing to avail

ourselves of their cooperation wherever necessary to organise our resources for the common good of all. But we loathe capitalistic exploitation of the people in whatever form it operates, irrespective of whether it is North Indian or Dravidian.

The position of the Dravidian Progressive Federation in this respect has been authoritatively made clear by its leader Mr. C. N. Annadurai who, in his address to the Mayavaram District Conference, said:

"We do not want to find ourselves in the same mire in which the Congress has got stuck. The Congress did not consider any means too low or too risky to gain its ends. The result is that the country's political freedom has today become the sole monopoly of a few Congress capitalists and black-marketeers and tax-dodgers. It is therefore very necessary that the means we adopt in our freedom struggle shall be such as will not tarnish our ideals. We know very well that by making certain concessions to Dravidian vested interests we can bring about the establishment of a separate Dravidian State much more easily and speedily than by the method we are pursuing at the moment. But we will not fall into that trap. It is very easy to secure the support of the capitalists and industrialists to our cause by giving them a blank cheque. They will be only too willing to support us because of their natural desire to step into the shoes of their North Indian counterparts. But we do not want any such situation to arise at all in Dravida Nad. We are not here to oblige Dravidian capitalism. In the Dravida

Nad which we envisage we will not countenance capitalism of any sort, be it North Indian or Dravidian. And this is the reason why the Dravidian capitalists are not with us."

This authoritative statement by the leader of the Dravidian Progressive Federation should serve to give a quietus to the whispering campaign carried on by the Brahmin press that our organisation is receiving financial aid from the Dravidian capitalists.

In the political sphere, the Dravidian Progressive Federation is engaged in mobilising an effective constitutional opposition to the government. Few reasonable men will deny that Congress rule over the country in the past four years has shown unmistakable signs of its tending more and more towards one-party dictatorship. Opposition to Congress Governments, Central and State, is either contemptuously brushed aside as of no consequence or ruthlessly suppressed under some pretext or other. The similarities between the now exiled Chiang's Kuomintang and the Congress governments are perilously close. Surely no patriot would wish for a repetition of Chinese history on Indian soil. Hence it is that the Dravidian Progressive Federation is striving, against odds to function as a constitutional opposition.

"The mechanism of a motor car", says Mr. C. N. Annadurai in his inimitable manner, "contains gadgets not only to make it move, but also to stop it. A country cannot necessarily become fertile merely because there are some rivers running through it. These rivers

must have banks to prevent them from flooding the lands. You do not build a house without an entrance, nor do you have an entrance without doors and bolts. A mere bamboo cane will not serve you in controlling a strong bullock. You must needs have it reined and hold the reins in your hands. In like manner, good government in a democratic republic is possible only if there are opposition parties in addition to the party in power. A democratic government without an opposition is like a car without brakes, a river without banks, a bullock without reins. Opposition to government is absolutely essential to see to it that the ruling party does not go out of control and to prevent it from turning oppressive and autocratic in character."

The Congress rulers of the country, far from permitting the Dravidian Progressive Federation to function as an opposition, are mortally afraid of it. We will do well to remember that we now live in a free country. The days are past when unrestrained absolutism stalked the land. The governance of the country is no longer the exclusive domain of the rich. The government is not carried on by any foreigner, it is in the hands of our own people. Our subjection to foreign rule has ended. That the government is composed of our own men is however no reason at all for the people not exercising the same vigilance as before in the matter of satisfying themselves whether or not it is conducted on right lines. In fact, the need for a vigilant and critical public opinion was never more urgent than now. As Norman Angell puts it, "The worst enemies of freedom are not govern-

ments, but those qualities in the minds of the people, which make it so pathetically easy to secure their approval of the measures which destroy the health of their society. Fortunately, to be aware of what the dangers are is half the battle in overcoming them."

It is this docile acquiescence of the Dravidian people to dictation from Delhi that has enabled the latter to keep the Dravidians in a state of semi-starvation for well-nigh four years. Nothing brings out more forcibly the Madras Government's servile dependence on the Government at Delhi than the heartless complacency which the latter has displayed all these four years towards the question of supplying enough rice to the people of Dravida Nad. Lack of space forbids us to recapitulate here in detail the Union Government's refusal to contract for the import of rice with certain foreign countries which at one time had huge exportable stocks, its diversion of even the little quantity of rice available to the wheat-eating North on the plea of lack of transport facilities and the State Government's incompetence in administering the enforcement of the rationing system. The Centre is no doubt more concerned with Kashmir than with stopping starvation in the South. Delhi has no qualms about letting our people starve. The Dravidian Progressive Federation serves as the authentic voice of the Dravidian people who have at long last freed themselves from their lethargy and have become acutely conscious of their political rights and responsibilities. Four years of Congress rule has convinced them that their very existence as a self-respecting people will be ended

unless they cut themselves away in time from Delhi's stranglehold.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the Dravidian Progressive Federation has not confined itself to mere destructive criticism of the Governments, Central and State. The Federationists have condemned Congress rule only where condemnation was called for, and have never hesitated to support Congress whenever it was entitled to such support. For instance, the Dravidian Progressive Federation has passed resolutions in its various conferences lending its wholehearted support to prohibition. In fact, it has done more than merely lending its moral support to this experiment. The vigorous propaganda it has done in favour of prohibition through the stage and the screen is something with which the entire propaganda machinery of the government cannot stand comparison at all. Again, when the Madras Government brought forward the Zamin Abolition Bill, the Dravidian Progressive Federation gave the measure its strong support in spite of the fact that there were many zamindars in the old Justice Party. Mr. C. N. Annadurai was one of the main speakers who spoke giving his unstinted support to the Bill in an all-party public meeting held in Madras and in which Mr. Kala Venkata Rao the author of the Zamin Abolition Bill also spoke. Once again the Dravidian Progressive Federation gave its support to the Government in passing the Hindu Religious Endowments (Amendment) Bill. It will thus be seen that the Federation has sought to strengthen the hands of the government whenever the latter set out to enforce any measure beneficial to

the people. It has shown time and again that public welfare is the only yardstick which it employs in measuring the activities of the government.

It is only two years since Mr. C. N. Annadurai and his followers inaugurated the Dravidian Progressive Federation after they seceded from the parent organisation. At the moment, over 600 Committees of the Dravidian Progressive Federation are functioning in the districts. About 2000 public meetings have been held, and even remote villages have been given an opportunity of listening to the message of the Dravidian movement. To have done all this within the short span of two years is no mean task. The surprising thing about it is that this achievement has been made possible without any help whatsoever from moneyed interests. And, what is more, the tremendous goodwill it has earned from the people has never been used thus far for narrow personal or party ends.

In his address before the First Annual Conference of the Mayavaram District Federation, Mr. C. N. Annadurai said: "We do not at all propose to align ourselves with other political parties with a view to forming any united parliamentary front for capturing power. Removing the present Ministry with the aid of a united parliamentary front is but a curative remedy in which we are not interested. Any ad hoc combination for the purpose of capturing ministerial seats will only serve to postpone the achievement of the fundamental objectives we have in view...It should not be difficult for us to obtain the goodwill and support of our Brahmin friends by assuring

them that we will ignore the contradictions inherent in the Aryan and Dravidian cultures, and that therefore the formation of a separate Dravidian State is a necessity which they cannot afford to overlook. If we did so, the Brahmin leaders will surely cooperate with us in combating the Delhi regime. In this connection, it is well to remember that the first person to raise the banner of revolt against the Delhi regime was none else than Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar. It is equally easy to come to a compromise with our Kerala friends by conceding their claim for Nanjil Nad. But we will never do that. Nanjil Nad must remain within the linguistic boundaries of Tamil Nad. We can also obtain the support of our Andhra friends by parting with a portion of Tamil Nad to be included in the Telugu area. But we will not yield to such unjust claims...The Dravidian Progressive Federation does not want to gather around itself all sorts of heterogeneous elements by parting with a portion of our noble cause. *We cannot afford to sacrifice the pieces because the whole shape will then be spoiled.* And this is the reason why in the Dravidian movement we cannot see any dramatic turns which may dazzle the onlooker and which however will not help enable us to realise our objectives. We are not interested in spectacular performances. We will no doubt succeed in achieving our aims and aspirations if we do not slacken our efforts to explain to our people the delicate and intricate nature of the problems confronting the formation of a separate Dravidian State. We should also like to make it clear to the outside world that in the process of carving out a separate State for ourselves, we are determined to scrupu-

lously avoid seeking the help of foreign elements. To seek foreign help is a degrading and dangerous act which we detest. We shall see to it that we do not become the satellite of any foreign power. The formation of a free Dravidian State must be achieved by the sweat and toil of the Dravidians themselves."

In these words the leader of Dravidian India has reiterated his firm determination not to make any compromise on essentials but to pursue steadfastly the Federation's objective of creating and establishing a free Dravidian State "comprising the territories of Tamil, Telugu, Canarese and Malayalam speaking peoples on the basis of self-determination."

The prospects of a free Dravidian India are at the moment brighter than ever before, for we have in Mr. C. N. Annadurai a leader who is at once a great statesman and a courageous captain; who, while keeping his eye on the distant horizon, is yet ever vigilant of the enemy mines floating immediately ahead. He knows the enemy's strength as well as his weaknesses. In like manner, he has a correct estimate of our own foibles as well as our strength and determination to achieve our objectives. He has allowed freedom of expression to his followers to an extent which is seldom allowed by leaders of other political organisations.

Let not the future historian of Dravida Nad be made to write that we failed to become free in spite of having had an Annadurai in our midst. Even as we write, we hear the sly chuckles of the enemy who believes that

we are incapable of unity and that the Dravidian movement will dissolve into nothingness with the whiff of a casual wind. Let us not have any illusions about the enemy's strength. He is strong, stronger than ever before. He has in his armoury all the weapons of religion, tradition, superstition, wealth and political power. Religion sanctifies his treachery; authority upholds his brutality; wealth spreads his nets far and wide. It is such an enemy we are contending against. But the Dravidians have never lacked courage. They can smash any opposition provided they are united. Such unity has been established for the first time in modern Dravidian history solely through the efforts of the Dravidian Progressive Federation. The Dravidians are on the march. The caravan moves on.

P. 4
Cp
19.